

The Anthropology of Moralities and the Amazonian package

This seminar makes use of University of Regina Prof. Carlos D. Londoño Sulkin's presence in Marburg. Professor Londoño Sulkin, currently Bessel Research Prize laureate from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and past president of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America, is a renowned scholar in the field of Amazonianist anthropology. His decades-long research among the Feenemínaha (the "People of the Center") in the Colombian Amazon constitutes a philosophically informed anthropology of moralities.

The seminar will consist in a preparation phase in which participants will read key parts of Londoño Sulkin's work as well as background literature on the anthropology of ethics/morality. In the second phase in February, Prof. Londoño Sulkin will lecture on central aspects of an anthropology of ethics and morality and lay out its ties to his proposed account of an "Amazonian package." This will be integrated into a workshop format to foster engaged discussions and interchange with students and colleagues on topics such as moralities, multiculturalism, and historical patterns in Amazonian sociality and cosmology.

Topics and readings:

Feb 15th, 2021. I will speak briefly about what I think is at stake in the account of the Amazonian package that I propose in Londoño Sulkin (2017) (<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/692783>) and in my book *People of Substance* (University of Toronto Press 2012). I will orientate the discussion towards the relationship between morality, personhood, and ontology, and will speak at some length about my use of Charles Taylor's take on language and on moral sources (read the 2006 article, or chapters 1 or 2 of his *Human Agency and Language*; these don't address moral sources but offer good background knowledge.) I will also engage briefly with Anthony Cohen's (1994) focus on individuality.

Feb 17th, 2021. We will continue to discuss Charles Taylor, and I will unpack his concept of moral sources. I will then give you a crash course on the concept of the performative, with some emphasis on how I've used it. I will be unpacking J.L. Austin's concept of the performative, Derrida's concepts of citationality and *différance*, Althusser's concepts of ideology, materiality, and interpellation, and some details of Judith Butler's use of these concepts. (I'm not asking you to do any reading here, but I've provided the Derrida and Althusser readings against the chance that you might be interested in re-reading them after I've unpacked them.)

Feb. 19. Students should have advanced on the Laidlaw volume. I will unpack key elements, and will furthermore bring in details from James Faubion's functionalist, systems approach to ethics, Lambek's take on ordinary ethics, and Keane's essay on the materiality of symbols. (I've included the Keane 2003 article in the readings I've made available to you. That one doesn't discuss 'affordances'; I'll provide a quick explanation of those in class. His discussion of materiality IS very important to follow my own emphasis on materiality.) Students might benefit from reading Jonathan Lear's book *Radical Hope*. But I won't push you. (There's a German version: *Radikale Hoffnung : Ethik im Angesicht kultureller Zerstörung*). If I have some time, I'll point out some nice links between this one and Taylor's work.

Feb 22. We will wrap up our general discussion of morality/ethics, if we don't manage to do so on Feb 19th. Before going back to the Amazonian Package, I'd like us to discuss the matter of cultural forms or patterns that last for a long time. This is of theoretical importance, and one of the aspects in which my account of the Amazonian package is both interesting and potentially weak. Please read Carrithers 1990, which I've included in the readings I've shared with you. It is vitally important that you read as well

Viveiros de Castro (1998). This one is hugely important in Amazonianist literature, shaping the regional specialization for a generation, and spilling over into high theory.

Feb 24: Please read at least three or four articles that deal with Amazonian bodies, perspectivism, and/or relations of alterity. I've provided a few, but feel free to look up your own. The bibliography of my 2017 article would be a valuable source for this purpose.

Conklin and Morgan 1996

Gow 2000

Halbmayer 2013

Lagrou 2000

Oakdale 2007: <https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/tipiti/vol5/iss1/4/>

Overing and Passes 2000

Seeger et al 1979 (in Portuguese...a classic!)

Taylor, A-C 1996.

Vilaca 2005: Chronically unstable bodies article

Viveiros de Castro and Taylor 2006

Feb 26: A collective critique of the concept of the Amazonian Package and its reproduction. Please make sure you read my 2017 article for this one, and make up your mind regarding the usefulness (or weaknesses) of the argument.